



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: Well, Hey there, my friend, how are you? Welcome back to the podcast. And if you're new, this is a really, really good one for you.

I do have to apologize in advance, it might be a little loud. Hopefully not. I feel like whenever I apologize for loudness and sound, you guys always tell me that you can't hear anything and that everything's fine, but I do have children home and they're having a little bit of a hard time understanding what quiet means. Particularly my seven year old daughter. I just heard her stomping around on the stairs and that's just how she rolls. I don't know, gracefulness is not something that has hit her yet. So she is loud and proud and stomps all around and leaps and skips and hops everywhere she goes. And it's just how she is. I always say to my husband, "Man, she is so hard on our house." If anything gets broken or messed up, she's the one, there was this huge red stain on the hardwood floor in her bedroom because of something she dropped and broken there and that won't come up.

And she one time, Oh my gosh, I'm going to see all the embarrassing things about her, one time she was taking a shower in our shower and we have a hook for the towel right outside the shower. So she had her towel on there and this towel is a towel that my mom had made for her when she was little, it's basically like a regular bath towel but then she somehow fashions like a hand towel into like a hood that she sows on there so they can kind of put the hood on and wrap the towel around themselves, and so she's been using that for years year as well. So it was up there. I don't know if she hung it up there. I think she did, hung it up on there. And then when she was getting out of the shower, she felt like she had a hard time getting it off. So rather than asking for help or even getting some other towel or something, she just ripped the hook off the wall. Legit, we needed full on drywall patching, just ripped it right out of the wall.

I wasn't laughing at the time, but yeah, that's who she is. And we just love her exactly as she is that's my job to just never think that she should ever be any different than she is. And that's just how it is. So we have one more week as I'm recording this one more week of time off for the kids. And then we have a little, how we vacation these days, which means rent a house and just go there. So why stay in your own house where you have all your stuff and it's easy. Why not go to someone else's house where you don't know what they have and then just live for a week.

But that's basically what's going to be happening. And so I'm actually looking forward to it because we haven't gone anywhere in a long time and maybe just a change of scenery.

It will be nice. This house that we're renting is on a golf course. So I'm telling myself that's basically like being in nature, right. Maybe I can go walk on the golf course in the morning. So it'd be nice as long as I don't get hit by stray golf balls.

So now I hear the dishwasher being filled. So at least they're cleaning up their lunch dish. And now someone's whistling. Now I just laugh about it. Before I'd be like, "You guys, oh my gosh." Now I'm like, you know what, I don't know what else to do they live here. And so do I. Actually, I do know what to do. Have I told you what I'm going to do? I think maybe I told you a long time ago, just as a quick aside and then it fell through, but I'll tell you really quick on here because this will help to hold me accountable too.

So you guys know that I have a closet office, like I'm right in the thick of everything. It's really, really hard because we have an old house it's hardwood floors, it's just loud. And there's really no place where I can get away to that is quiet when there's a lot of people here, it's just really challenging. And so earlier this year before COVID hit, I had hired a company to renovate my attic into an office space. It's already partially finished as a bedroom. But it was done in the early eighties and super not good, no way is it good. So, the situation was, we were going to hire this company, we're going to make it all beautiful, it's going to be amazing.

So I will skip over all the details until it's all done. I'll tell you all the details once it's done. But basically it fell through based on some requirements of our city. And so now I am looking for somebody else to help me with this. And so I've been reaching out to somebody and I have someone coming over this week to a look, actually tomorrow I think, and I am determined, this thing is going to get done so that my poor children can live a normal life in their household and be able to move around and not feel like they have to be so quiet all the time.

And I get my own space. Isn't that going to be exciting? I'm so excited. I'm really, really excited for it. Because in my mind it is the most gorgeous, beautiful thing. And when it's done, then whenever I do these live trainings, you're going to be able to see me in it. So, that's what that's all about.

Okay. So what we're going to talk about today is your experience of losing weight and how you don't have to feel like you're on a diet to lose weight. So many of us have this belief that it's impossible to lose weight in any kind of way, shape, form, or fashion that is comfortable, easy, there's no fluidity to it, it's something that we have to work really hard at, it's very uncomfortable, it's very difficult and it's fraught with a lot of disappointment and it's just a lot of negative experiences. And what I want to offer to you today is that, that's just a belief that you have based on your prior experiences of losing weight. And I want to introduce to you the idea that it really can be comfortable and easy and actually a really, really nice experience to lose weight when you do it in a way that really serves your body and as well as when you are managing your brain and getting help with that.

So I was thinking about, as I was preparing for this, what does it feel like to be on a diet? When you think about being on a diet, what does it feel like? And there were six emotions that immediately came to mind and those were, stressful, confusing, miserable, frustrated, hopeful and then I wrote conniving, I'll get into that soon. But so what I want to do in this episode is spend some time in each of these emotions and show you how it really can be different and explain that to you.

So let's start with stressful. So when I think about being on a diet as being stressful, I think about having to spend tons of time planning, having to change everything. So nothing feels automatic anymore, I have to possibly count things, measure things, I have to figure out how to cook things I've never cooked before, I have to not have a lot of the things that I like to have. It's just a lot to think of. It takes a lot of my brain space. It takes a lot of my energy. I have to focus on it all the time. I have to be resisting all the other foods that I want to eat all of the time. It is just a source of stress. As I'm even explaining this to you, I'm feeling the stress in my body. I can feel the tension in my muscles. I have had this experience so many times it's familiar to me, even though it hasn't happened in many years.

So here's how this really can be different. Of course, the stress that we have is because of what we're thinking, but here's what's awesome. Sometimes you just change the circumstance to make it easier. Like it's okay to change the facts of what you're doing so that it's easier for you. So if you're thinking, "Well, macros, counting macros is the only way that I can really lose weight. And that takes up a lot of time. And it's a lot of planning and a lot of figuring things out." Then you're not going to really be open to the idea that maybe there's a way that you can lose weight, where you don't have to do that at all. Rather than using your brain to tell you how much to eat, you can actually tap into your body and your body can convey that information to you. And it's so much easier. And it doesn't require a calculator or an app to help you to figure things out. And that same goes for any kind of program that requires measuring or counting of things, counting calories, any of those things.

Can you do those things? Of course, you can. My concern is always the sustainability of it. It's not something that most people want to sustain. And I feel like, what I notice, is that the people who do it ongoing, there's people who are like, "Hey, last 5, 10 years, I've been counting macros." They still don't know how to eat without counting macros. And if that's working for them, that's fine. But I find that most people ultimately don't want to do that. Or they feel really stuck with counting the macros because if they aren't counting macros, they don't know how to keep their weight off, they don't know how to actually access that inner wisdom that their body has always known and is signaling to them, it's just not clobbering them over the head so they have to learn how to listen, to be able to know what to eat.

So the stress comes from thinking it has to be this certain difficult way, except it totally doesn't have to be at all. I know it was my own experience and so many of my clients as well, where they're like, "Oh my gosh, this is actually a really easy, yeah, there was a little planning, a little adjusting in the beginning, first couple of weeks, but now it's just like old hat it's just happening. And this is the easiest I've ever lost weight ever in my life. It's the most comfortable. It is, frankly, something that I'd be willing to do for the rest of my life."

And the reason why they're willing to do that is because the way that I help you to figure out what to eat is personalized to you. So it's only food that you like to eat, and it's only food that's available to you easily. And it's only food that works for your family, or whoever ends up doing your cooking for you if it's not you. It ends up being so personalized and tailored to you and your life that why would you want to do anything else rather than follow that?

And so the stress comes from the thinking about, "I'm not going to have what I need. I'm not going to be able to figure it out at a restaurant. I mean, do I have to bring a scale to the restaurant and measure my food on a food scale? How am I going to figure this out? Am I going to be good at being able to estimate the portion set I need to have?" That's so much stress that comes from thinking that your body doesn't already know what it needs and that it's not actually telling you, except it is.

So all of that stress can be completely dropped when you learn how to trust your body and learn how to listen to your body and learn to really, truly make it easy by making it work for you, truly personalized to you. This is what I feel like is part of the secret sauce of my program. Nobody has the same plan in my program because everyone's life is different. Can't tell you how many times I was handed, sign up for some weight loss thing, it's like here's like three or four weeks of menus and recipes and a grocery list. And I'd be like, "Well, I mean, I'd probably eat that. And honestly, my husband probably would too, but my kids aren't. So now what am I doing? Am I cooking multiple meals now? This is just compounding the amount of work that I have to do. It's not simplifying it."

It always came back to me when I was struggling with my weight. Why does this have to be so complicated? Does it really have to be this hard? It doesn't seem like it should really have to be this hard. And I tried the macro thing, I tried all of it and it was just like, "Really? Seriously? This is what we have to do? There's no other way?" And then I found the other way and it is so much easier and it feels so much more connected to your body, which feels so grounding, it feels true, it feels solid. And there's no fear behind that. It's like you and your body are on the same team, your buddies, your partners, you're doing this together, rather than going, "Hey, my body doesn't know anything. So I have to use my brain to override it constantly." And that's what we're doing when we think we need to be micromanaging everything.

Okay. Now let's talk about how confusing it can feel to be on a diet. I know it's so often so easy to be confused. Can I eat this or can I not? Is this okay or isn't it? They give you all the information and then you're like, "But what about this gray zone and that gray zone and this other gray area. I don't know what to do. Can I have it? Can I not?" Then you get all in your head being all confused. "Well, I thought maybe I could have it and then I ate it. But then the scale went up a little bit. So does that mean I shouldn't have it? I don't really know."

The confusing is just the way that our brains are trying to make sense of what we're doing, but also in a lot of ways, keeping us kind of stuck. If we don't really know what to do, then we can just kind of quit eventually. Even though deep down, we really do want to lose the weight. But if it seems hard and confusing, then it's easy to be like, "You know what? That didn't work for me." And then you can go back to the old eating habits that are so familiar and often very comforting for you. And really just the way that you cope in your life, how you make your life tolerable.

So the confusing element can be totally dropped by first of all, having a guide who can really help you to determine exactly what you need to do. I always love it when there's just like a step by step process. I'm like, "Just tell me what to do. And I will do it. I'm tired of this nonsense of being confused and should I do this? And all the indecision. Just tell me what to do that's going to work." And that is what I love to be able to offer my clients.

Now, it doesn't mean that there isn't experimentation that we have to figure out what works for you, but there's a lot of experience. I've helped over a thousand women physicians now with losing weight. So, there's experience that comes from that. And more often than not, we are able to get things going very, very quickly.

So how else does it feel to be on a diet? Miserable. Well, because I always was thinking, "Well, I just need to do this so all my clothes fit again. I just need to drop those 40 pounds, 35 pounds, however much it was, I just need to get down to that weight so that I can be happy again." Thinking that the number on the scale or how my clothes fit, determines how I feel in my life, except it's how I think, of course. So when I was eating what I wanted and gaining, I didn't have to be miserable because I got to think amazing thoughts about all the extra food that I got to eat, even though it's still also made me feel sick because I overate all the time. And I thought I had all these stomach issues. A lot of them were actually because I just overate food.

So when you recognize that weight loss does not have to be a miserable experience, in fact, it can actually be a really awesome, supportive, connecting, loving experience between you and your body. You can decide to lose this weight and not feel like, "Oh my gosh, it's going to be so awful. I have to be on this diet. And if I'm on a diet, then I have to be miserable." Instead, it's like, what I'm doing is transforming my relationship with my body. I'm really figuring out how to treat myself well and treat my body well and eat what actually serves me. And that is not a miserable experience. That's actually an awesome experience. And when it's an awesome experience, you're not so quick to go back to your, "Normal way of eating."

When losing the weight is so miserable you're like, "Well, listen, I can't do this forever. So I got to figure out a way to maintain that isn't so awful like this is." But that's not how maintenance works. What you want to do is figure out a way of eating that supports your body and feels so good to you that you'd be happy to continue eating that way the rest of your life. And that is how you maintain your weight. Okay.

The next one is feeling frustrated and this happens so often when you're dieting. Because you're like, "Hey, it would be great if I could just lose 25 pounds in about two and a half days, can we arrange for that?" That would be amazing. I would love that. And that's of course not how it goes. And so we start something and sometimes we get that carrot right away. Sorry for the food analogy, but we get that benefit of seeing the scale move and we're like, "This is working. Okay. This is great." But not always. I see that often. Everyone's like, "Okay, I'm changing how I'm eating, nothing's really happening on the scale." And getting so frustrated believing nothing's happening, that this isn't going to work, nothing is working in your body, your body won't cooperate, this plan is terrible. All of those things.

Frustration is totally optional. Especially when you change your mindset around weight loss. When you're dieting, you're looking for a quick fix. When you're actively losing the weight to lose it permanently, frustration, it just doesn't make any sense. Why be frustrated when you're in a plateau? Because that's certainly not going to make the scale move, instead you can start thinking, "Okay, so how honest am I being with my food journal? Am I really, really writing everything down? How many things am I doing that I think don't make a difference, but maybe they are making a difference."

I think I've told this story on the podcast before, but I'll tell it again. Early on, I think it might've been the first time I did Weight Watchers, back in those days, fruit, actually I don't even know how Weight Watchers those things now, but fruit was not free in quotes. You had to count points for fruit. And so I remember this one girl who was there and I'd been doing it for quite some time. And I remember her saying, "Well, I'm not losing any more weight and it's just not really working." And whatever the leader said brought something up, but she's like, "Well, I mean, it's not like I count fruit, but it's fruit. I mean, you don't have to count fruit." Well, part of the plan was counting fruit.

So it was so interesting how she had decided for herself that counting fruit didn't count. It shouldn't make a difference, but then she was also frustrated because she wasn't losing weight. So, she wasn't really following the program. And had she, maybe she would have lost some weight, who knows, we don't know if she would have, but it sounded like it was probably likely.

So when you are thinking about it from a permanent weight loss perspective, you start just getting genuinely curious, where are there areas that I'm thinking this doesn't make a difference, but it actually might. And how about I experiment with playing with how I do that to see if it does make a difference. It's also a difference for playing the long game. So when you're trying to lose weight and you're trying to lose it quickly, because you think you're going to feel better when you're thin, then you're like, "Okay, I don't have time for plateaus. What kind of diet mentality can I institute in order to get this weight off?" That's when we start doing things like, "Well I overate here, well, I'll just fast extra, or I'll eat really little on this day. Or I'll just exercise more." That is disordered eating. That is diet mentality. That is not what we do in my program at all.

What we do is we understand what the effects are of everything that we do and pay attention because our bodies are telling us and your friend or someone else you know might be able to eat that way and to lose weight. But if your body won't lose weight when you're doing that, then we have to look at why. And that's again, part of keeping the program really individualized means that you really figure out what works for you. What feels good in your body. I can't possibly know that, but I can help you to figure that out.

And once you know this, as your body changes, as you age, as things change for you, just in every area, you have developed that skill of knowing how to assess whether something's serving you or not. Whether this is a good thing for you to continue or not, versus, "Well, if someone doesn't tell me what to do, then I don't know what to do. I have to get X many carbs and protein grams and all those things in. If someone doesn't tell me that, then I don't know what to do, and so frustrating." No, it's not frustrating at all. It's totally information that you can gather from your own body, in your experience of eating food and living your life and your energy levels and everything.

A lot of people feel frustrated with the scale too. They want to see it going down all the time. I see this all the time with my clients. They're like, "Hey, I ate tons of super salty food and Oh, I'm so annoyed the scales up a pound and a half." I'm like, "Well, right, it's just water." You got to manage your brain. That frustration is so optional. You could just get curious about it. Interesting. My body is hanging onto some water today. I'm curious to see what happens over the next couple of days. This is again how you keep yourself in a state where you permanently keep your weight off. If every time the scale goes up, you get frustrated and it turns into big dramatic event. You're so much more likely to eat in response to that, rather than just being curious, just having a plan.

My mother who was a long time, naturally thin person. I remember her telling me a few years ago and she's well in to her seventies now, "Oh no, this is what I do. When I travel, I always end up gaining a little bit. But what I do is I get back home and I go back to my normal eating and I give it three days. And if things don't settle out by three days and I'm up more than three pounds from where I want to be, then I know, okay, I've got to make a few changes and this is the first change I make. And then I see, and I give it a few days to see what kind of results, if anything is happening. And if not, then I do this thing. And if I have to, I do that. And that takes care of it. And then I can go back to my normal way of eating once those couple of pounds have come off." I mean, does that sound frustrating? No, she's completely logical and rational about all of it.

She's like, this is basically the protocol that she's created for herself if she gained some weight. And she knows exactly what to do to make it work. And she figured that out not because anyone told her, she's never worked with a weight loss coach, she's never been to a weight loss program in her life. She literally just experimented and figured out what worked for her body. And you can do that too. That doesn't have to be frustrating.

Now let's talk about being hopeful because hopeful sounds like it's good. Hopeful sounds amazing. It feels hopeful to be on a diet. Maybe this is going to work. Maybe I'm really going to get this weight off. Maybe this'll be my time and I'll really get it off. But we often have the sense that the diet is what creates the weight loss then. We're hopeful that this program or this plan is going to work for us. And what I suggest is that you instead direct the hope towards yourself and rearrange it so that it's confidence and it's perseverance and it's really having your own back. Meaning, I'm going to figure this out, I don't need hope to figure this out because I know I'm going to do it. Even if I'm at a plateau for three months or six months or nine months, because of all these other things going on, I'm not going to give up, I'm going to keep going. I will not give up.

So hope is not required when you know, you're not going to give up. And you know, you're going to continue to keep at it until you create the result that you want. Okay, so if you're feeling like I hope this happens, I hope this works. It's so passive. It's so much relying on other people and programs and other people's ideas to determine what your result is. So I want to suggest that if you really want to lose weight permanently, you ditch the hope and you really move toward a determination to get the weight off. That doesn't mean it has to be in a rush and doesn't mean that it has to take over your whole entire life. But that you know you're going to figure this out. You're going to keep going and keep getting help and keep doing what's required until you have this solved. No hope required there.

Okay, the last feeling I came up with is conniving. So let's talk about that. And I thought to myself, what is that? What is that feeling? And you know what it is? It's when you're gaming the system. It's like when you're doing those little cheats, when you're telling yourself this little lick won't matter, it's not a big deal, who really cares. Kind of being sneaky and surreptitious and kind of sly. That's that conniving feeling of like, "Don't tell me what to do. I'm going to do this. And I'm going to do it even this other way, doing things you say I shouldn't do." It's like a little bit of a rebellion.

And what I found is that does not serve you because when you are cheating on anything, you're also cheating on yourself. You made a commitment to do this thing. And now you're saying, "No, you're not worth enough to me to actually do that."

To actually be disappointed for the 30 seconds that you want to eat this thing. Instead of managing your mind, you're going to just give into your urges and your desire and just eat whatever the thing is or drink it.

And when you are really losing weight free from that diet mentality, you're not doing that. You notice your brain going like, "Hey, what if we just do this cheat day? What if we just have one of these things?" And you haven't planned for it and you're like, "Nope, that's not how we roll anymore. That is not how I roll. If I want that I can plan for it because I make the rules because it's my plan. Not because I need to rebel against anybody else. Not because I need to have that inner teen in me come out and feel like I'm invincible. I can have this ice cream and it won't matter." I mean, maybe, maybe not. But if you do that enough times, it's probably going to matter.

And so if you notice yourself feeling kind of conniving, feeling like you're working the system, trying to game it, that is all diet stuff. We need to lose weight permanently where you know what, I can have anything I want, as long as I've thought it through and I'm not acting in the moment. Because I really want to be using that part of my brain that really does have my best interest in mind. The part of my brain, that's going to be proud of me later. That part that controls my future self who's going to be going, "You know what, Katrina, thank you so much for not eating that thing that you really wanted in the moment. Thank you, like seriously. Thank you. Because life is so much better and easier now cause you didn't do it."

That's that true partnership that you have with yourself and with your body that you take into maintenance. These are skills you're not learning when you're on a diet. And that's one of the reasons why diets aren't working, why you aren't able to keep the weight off, because you aren't developing these skills that are required for permanent weight loss.

And with that, I will say goodbye. And I hope you have a wonderful week. I'll talk to you very soon.